

Environmental Quality Incentives Program in Rhode Island

Customer Focus – The Howard Farm, Providence County, Rhode Island

Bob Howard was recognized as the Northern Rhode Island Conservation District's Conservation Farmer of the Year. Bob's father started the farm in 1923, and he and his family have been farming ever since. The farm is located in the town of Glocester. Bob raises beef cows and pigs, and produces hay and vegetables.

Bob contacted NRCS for help with his manure management. As a result, Bob has implemented an Agricultural Waste Management Plan that consists of several methods for keeping rainwater away from the cow manure in order to reduce the amount of water needing filtration. First, gutters were installed on the barn to divert the water away from the heavy use area. Bob also graded his gravel road to keep the flow of water in a direction away from the cow manure. The manure is now shoveled out of the barn into a covered area over a cement slab, where it is allowed to dry out and then distributed as fertilizer to his fields.

Any water that does pass through the heavy use area is treated by a filter strip system, which begins with screening out solids before the water is piped to a grass filter strip for further filtration. This operates similar to a leach field used in a conventional septic system, but also allows for vegetative uptake of the nutrients.

The water that leaves Bob's farm travels directly to Peep Toad Brook, which feeds into the Scituate Reservoir. Bob's choices for farm conservation will help to prevent any contamination from entering into the State of Rhode Island's primary source of drinking water.

Bob has plans for the future to continue working toward conservation. He plans to develop two fields for pasture rotation and to remove Multi Flora Rose, an invasive species. When Bob retires, his son, Mark, plans to continue the farming operation with other family members.



Before, notice the manure waste in front of the barn



After, covered heavy use area